

ASTHMA IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Common, Costly and Climbing

Produced by the Bureau of Community Health and Chronic Disease Prevention, SC DHEC

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ASTHMA IN THE UNITED STATES

- U.S. asthma cases more than tripled **from an estimated 6.7 million in 1980 to 21.9 million in 2002.**
- Costs for asthma have almost tripled **from an estimated \$6.2 billion in 1990, to over \$15 billion in 2000.**
- An estimated **nine million U.S. children are asthmatic**, more twice the entire population of South Carolina.
- **3,964 people died** of asthma in 2003.

ASTHMA IN SOUTH CAROLINA

- Currently about **190,000 adults** and **91,000 children** suffer from asthma in South Carolina, based on 2003 estimates.
- **8.9% of children** in South Carolina currently suffer from asthma (7.4% White and 12.4% Black) compared to 8.0% nationwide, based on 2003 estimates.
- In 2003, 1.4% (7,671) of ALL hospitalizations were for asthma.
- More than 36% of all those hospitalizations were among children.

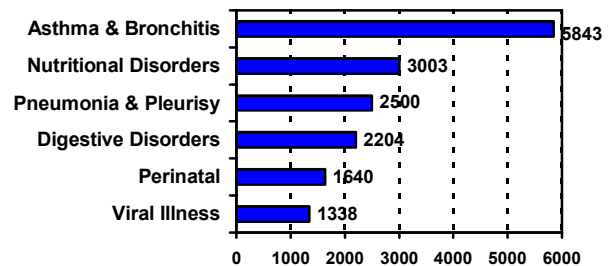
While children and young adults are the main population described here, but older adults also suffer from asthma.

Many people with asthma receive care from their family doctor, but the best asthma data in South Carolina comes from hospitalization and Emergency Room [ER] records. People with asthma severe enough to need hospitalization or an ER visit may be the ones most in need of education and public health services.

Young people suffer the most from asthma in South Carolina.

- Asthma prevalence rate is **highest among those under 18 years old**, and is the **most common chronic disease** and **leading cause of disability** among children.

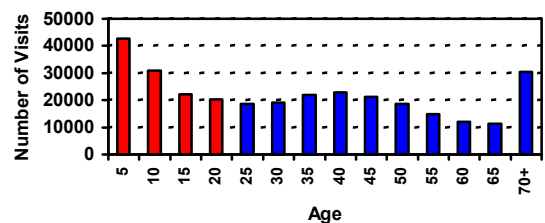
Leading Causes of Hospitalization, Children Under 18, South Carolina, 2003



ASTHMA & BRONCHITIS

- **Asthma and related conditions** were the leading cause of children's hospitalizations in 2003, with over 5800 admissions. The third leading cause, pneumonia, is diagnosed more frequently in children with asthma.
- **Over 220,000 ER visits** were due to asthma related illnesses during 1999-2003.
- **Children visited the ER more than 91,000 times** (41% percent of the total) for asthma during 1999-2003.
- **Over 32,000 visits were multiple ER visits for children** during 1999-2003; they accounted for more than one third of all multiple ER visits for asthma.

Asthma Hospital & ER Visits by Age South Carolina, 1999-2003



What are symptoms of asthma ?

- ✓ Shortness of breath
- ✓ Wheezing
- ✓ Tightness in the chest
- ✓ Coughing

Some asthmatic people don't wheeze. They may only cough, especially after exercise or during the night.

What are some common triggers for an asthma attack ?

- ✓ Cigarette smoke
- ✓ Dander (flakes) from the skin, hair or feathers of pets
- ✓ House dust mites
- ✓ Cockroaches
- ✓ Pollen from grass and trees
- ✓ Molds (indoor and outdoor)
- ✓ Upper airway infections, like colds
- ✓ Scented hair spray, cosmetics
- ✓ Scented cleaning products
- ✓ Strong odors from fresh paint or cooking
- ✓ Automobile fumes
- ✓ Air pollution, including ozone
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Strong feelings (crying, joy)

What can you expect from proper asthma treatment ?

- ✓ Enjoy sports and exercise.
- ✓ Sleep through the night without asthma symptoms.
- ✓ Prevent asthma attacks.
- ✓ Avoid side effects from asthma medicines.
- ✓ Changes in weather and temperature

Can asthma attacks be prevented? YES !

Can asthma attacks be treated? YES !

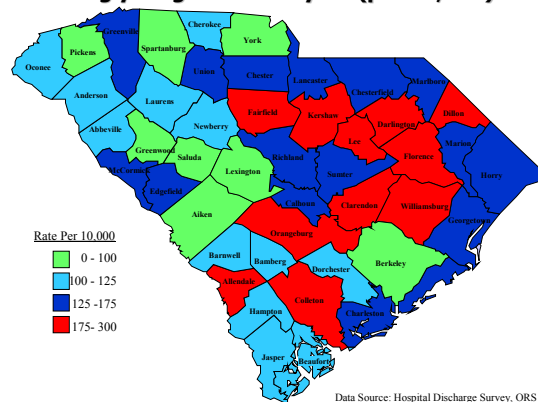
To prevent asthma attacks, work closely with your doctor to:

- ✓ Reduce contact with your triggers, especially at home.
- ✓ Stop smoking (cigarettes, cigars, or pipes) and keep your children away from cigarette smoke
- ✓ Monitor your own breathing and airways with a simple device called a peak flow meter.
- ✓ Make a medicine plan to treat your symptoms when you have an attack.
- ✓ Learn when to seek medical help.
- ✓ Treat symptoms early.

The Cost of Asthma in South Carolina

- **Annual expenditure due to asthma is in excess of 154 million** of which \$88 million is for direct and \$66 million for indirect medical cost.
- The **public and private sectors** share the cost of asthma equally.
- In 2000, the South Carolina Medicaid program expended a **total of more than \$4.5 million** for claims due to asthma diagnosis for children (between 2 and 18 years old).
- **Nearly half (more than \$2.3 million)** of the total expenditures were for **preventable and avoidable costs** – emergency room visits, and inpatient hospitalizations.
- The **costs of asthma to Medicaid can be greatly reduced** by educating patients to recognize signs early, thus reducing emergency room and hospital visits.

2003 Hospital or ED Discharge Rate due to Asthma among younger than 18 year (per 10,000)



South Carolina Asthma Planning Alliance Partners

- ◆ American Lung Association of South Carolina
- ◆ South Carolina Budget and Control Board
- ◆ Carolina Medical Review
- ◆ Family Connection of South Carolina
- ◆ South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
- ◆ South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
- ◆ South Carolina Society for Respiratory Care
- ◆ University of South Carolina School of Medicine